

John 4:21 “Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

22 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

- We talk about worship in our churches. We encourage worship in our churches. We believe we worship when we come into our churches. Sometimes we actually do!
- We want to try and determine what biblical worship is and what it is not. Things like singing, preaching, going to church and praying are not by themselves worship.
- They may serve to stimulate worship, and they may be carried out in a spirit of worship, but they are not worship in and of themselves. So, if these things that we all believe to be worship are not really worship, then what is it?

- I would like for us to get a handle on the true nature of Biblical Worship. I want us to come to understand the nature true Biblical Worship. I want us to see why true Biblical Worship matters. I want us to understand how we can become involved in true biblical worship.

A SHORT SUMMARY OF BIBLICAL WORSHIP:

I want to call your attention to several passages that speak to the matter of worship. I want to give you a synopsis, a general summary, of what worship is. In our text (**John 4:21-30**), I want to call your attention to the Word “worship”. It appears in this text, in some form, eight times. Each time it appears in this passage, it translates the Greek word “proskuneo”. This word literally means “to kiss toward”.

- It is used of the ancient tradition of a person kissing the hand of a superior. A person would bow to the ground, bow the head and kiss the hand of one who was superior to him. It was also used in the sense of “bowing down, or prostrating oneself.” A person would bow before a superior with a sense of honor, respect, awe, reverence and homage. It is also used to speak of a dog licking his master’s hand. That is an image of trust, respect and honor.

Our English word “worship” comes from the old Anglo-Saxon word “weorthscipe”. It refers to giving someone their “worth”. When it comes to God, it means that we ascribe to God His worth.

It means that we state and affirm His supreme value and glory. When we apply these images to our relationship with God, it simply means that we humble ourselves and give glory, honor, reverence, awe, respect and homage to God.

It means that we recognize His vastly superior standing and we humble ourselves before Him and give glory to Him. Thus, worship is giving.

Essentially, it is giving honor and respect to God. Hopefully, that is the reason we gather in our Church. We are not here to honor the preacher, the singers, the church or our traditions.

We are here to humble ourselves before our great God and give Him the glory He deserves. So, we should not come to church “to get a blessing,” yet truly we receive a blessing while we worship. We should come before God daily, whether it is here, at home or wherever, to give glory, honor, respect, and reverence to the Lord God Almighty.

There are over 87 Hebrew and Greek words that are used to describe the concepts of praise and worship. There are over 600 references to praise and worship in the Bible.

Worship literally fills the pages of Scripture. In the book of Genesis, Adam and Eve fell into sin because they worshiped self instead of God. The book of Revelation pulls back the curtain between earth and Heaven and gives us a glimpse of pure worship in glory.

All the way through the Bible, you see scenes of worship recorded for our help in understanding what worship is and what it is not.

Worship is the absolute non-negotiable of the Christian life. The Christian must worship. I will go so far as to say that the truly redeemed child of God can't not worship.

Worship to the believer is like the engine in your automobile. Worship is, to our spiritual lives, the most important and essential element. It is as natural for a Christian to worship as it is for a person to breathe.

For a Christian to live without true worship is like a fish trying to live without water. It is like a bird trying to fly without wings. It is like a house trying to stand without a foundation. Worship is essential to everything we are and do as believers. That is why understanding what worship is, is so vital and so important. I want to give you some possible definitions of worship.

Worship is a concept that defies adequate definition. We just have to take a stab at it and hope that we come close. For instance, how do you adequately describe a sight of rare beauty? How do you tell someone else about a pleasant fragrance or an amazing flavor? How do you explain time? Worship is something that is better experienced than it is defined.

Still, I want to try and do the impossible. I want to try to define worship. One of the best definitions I have read so far:

“Worship is the submission of all of our nature to God.
To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God,
To feed the mind with the truth of God,
To purge the imagination by the beauty of God,
To open the heart to the love of God,
To devote the will to the purpose of God.

And all this gathered up in adoration is the greatest of human expressions of which we are capable.”

Warren Wiersbe defines worship as, “the believers response of all that they are – mind, emotions, will and body – to all that God is and says and does.”

Today, I want to quote a few more authors and their attempts at a definition. As we consider their words, we will look at their definitions in light of the Word of God. What they have to say about worship, along with what the Word of God say about worship, can help us understand the matter of worship a little more clearly.

1. Worship is “The overflow of a grateful heart, under a sense of Divine favor.”

This writer is teaching us that worship is a spontaneous event. True worship does not have to be pumped and primed; it is the outpouring of a heart that is filled a sense of God’s goodness, greatness and glory.

In *Psalm 45:1*, David said it this way, “***My heart is inditing a good matter...***” The word “inditing” means “to keep moving”. It was used to speak of a boiling pot of water. It has the idea of “boiling over, or bubbling up”. As David reflected on the glory and majesty of God as it is revealed in His creation, His Word and His salvation,

his heart boiled over with love and praise for His God. When his full heart overflowed, worship ascended to God.

We find this same picture in ***Psalm 23:5 "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over."***

So worship is the overflow of a heart filled with the glory of who God is and what He has done. When we stop to reflect on Him, His power, His grace, His love, His mercy, His salvation, His Word, and a host of other things, our hearts are filled to overflowing with love and adoration for Him.

When that heart boils over, worship is the result. Worship is my entire being giving honor, adoration and glory to all that God is.

2. Worship is "the outpouring of a soul at rest in the presence of God."

In this definition, a emphasis is on the spiritual condition of the worshiper. The believer is at perfect peace with God. He or she is conscience of the fact that they are in a right relationship with God. They are assured that they have been accepted by God, ***Ephesians 1:6.***

The believer has come to realize that, God sees him as sanctified, justified, redeemed, regenerated and blessed with all spiritual blessings,

Ephesians 1:3 "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly

places in Christ:

As the believer considers who he is in Jesus, his heart is filled with adoration, love and praise for the God Who made it possible. He reaches heavenward with His praises directed toward the God Who loved, saved and blessed him. This is the idea expressed by the woman for her beloved in ***Song of Solomon 2:3-4***, ***“As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.”***

3. Worship is “the occupation of the heart, not with its needs, or even with its blessings, but with God Himself.”

Too often our praying and our thinking are occupied with self. Is it not true that we come to church “to get a blessing”? It is not true that we go to God in prayer because we have a need? It is not true that we often engage in what we call worship because of what we want to get out of it? In truth, genuine Biblical Worship is not about us getting anything. It is about us being lost in the wonder of Who God is.

When David was told by Nathan that God would establish David’s throne and kingdom forever, David simply sat down in the presence of God, ***2 Samuel 7:18*** ***“Then went king David in, and sat before the LORD, ..”*** As David sat there and basked in the glory and goodness of God, he was overcome with wonder and praise (read ***2 Samuel 7:18-29***). That is the essence of true worship.

This image is made clear by a couple of glimpses at Heaven's worship. Consider **Revelation 4:11** "**Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.**"

And **Revelation 5:9-14**. In these verses, not a single petition is made, not a single request is made, all that we find is pure, unadulterated worship of the Person and glory of God, talk about Biblical Worship.

4.

While anyone in the world, even an unbeliever, can recognize that God exists and that He is Supreme and the Creator, not everyone has the capacity for worship. The lost man can understand the reality of God, but he cannot appreciate the truths about God that can only be revealed by the Holy Ghost.

1 Corinthians 2:14 "**But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.**"

Believers, on the other hand, enjoy a special relationship with God. We enjoy a "living water" experience with Him. When Jesus spoke to the woman at the well, He said, "Jesus answered and said unto her, **Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of**

water springing up into everlasting life,” John 4:13-14.

This is a picture of what happens to us when we are saved. The Spirit of God takes up residence in our hearts. He fills us with the wonder of Who God is and He flows out of us in worship and service to God, ***John 7:37-39.***

Worship is really the “living water” returning to its source.

In ***Ecclesiastes 1:7***, Solomon wrote these words, ***“All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again.”***

In this verse, Solomon is talking about the hydrological cycle. The water comes down from the sky in the form of rain, snow and ice. This water fills the river and they flow down to the seas. The water is evaporated by the sun and goes back into the clouds. Then, it is dropped on the earth once more.

Worship operates the same way. The Spirit on the inside, Who was sent from Heaven to our hearts, bubbles up and fills us with the wonder and glory of our God. When He does this the praise in our hearts flows out and is offered up to God in the form of worship. It goes back to the source. Thus, all true worship begins with God; it flows to and through us; and ascends back to God. It is a divine cycle.

Conclusion:

Everybody worships someone or something. John MacArthur tells the story of an article he read in the Chicago Tribune. It seems that a woman from New Mexico noticed that the skillet burns on

one of her tortillas she was frying resembled the face of Jesus. She showed it to her husband and neighbors who agreed the marks on the tortilla looked like a face and it truly bore a resemblance to their idea of what Jesus looked like.

At any rate, she took her tortilla to her priest to have it blessed. And she testified that the tortilla had changed her life. Now her husband once again agreed. He said that his wife had been a more peaceful, happy, submissive wife since the tortilla had arrived in their home. So the priest, not accustomed to blessing tortillas was somewhat reluctant, but he agreed to do it. She took the tortilla home, put it in a glass case with piles of cotton to make it look like it was floating on a cloud. She built a special altar for it and opened the little shrine to visitors.

And within a few months, more than 8,000 people came to the shrine of the Jesus of the tortilla. And all of them agreed that the face in the burn marks on the tortilla, well, that it was the face of Jesus. Except, that is, for one reporter. He thought it looked like former heavyweight boxing champion Leon Spinks. Well, John MacArthur then comments, "It seems incredible that so many people would worship a tortilla. But such a distorted concept of worship is not really unusual in contemporary society."

So, some people worship a tortilla. Some bow down to rocks, statues and animals. Others give their worship to themselves, or their families or their possessions. Some worship their church, their favorite preacher or their old, moldy traditions.

The truth is, everybody gives honor, respect and adoration to

someone or something. To whom or to what do you give your worship? Is your worship God focused, God-directed and God-centered? Is your worship self-focused, self-directed and self-centered? Or, is your worship religion-focused, religion-directed and religion-centered? I want to challenge you to learn to worship correctly.

Has the Lord spoken to your heart about this matter of worship? If your worship is not what you want it to be and if it is not worship that is pleasing to the Lord, come to Him and let Him help you with your worship.

If you are like me and you want to deepen your worship experience, come before the Lord and ask Him to help you with that.

If you just want to let out the worship that resides in your heart, you should kneel before Him and worship Him today.

Do what He tells you and He will bless your worship!